



NEWS RELEASE

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

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Water Board Recommends Idaho Legislature Approve Nez Perce Agreement

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The Idaho Water Resource Board passed a resolution during its monthly meeting on Friday recommending the Idaho Legislature approve the Nez Perce Agreement, recently affirmed by Congress.

The Agreement, unveiled last spring after six years of negotiations, settles all water right claims made by the Tribe to Snake River Basin water. Besides the legislature, the Agreement still must gain final approval from President Bush, Governor Kempthorne and the Nez Perce Tribe.

The Water Board also heard an update from Water Resource Director Karl Dreher on the "Invitation for Offers to Sell" water rights proposal, which was made public last week and is an element of the overall framework design in addressing obligations under the Endangered Species Act and balancing demands for water on the East Snake Plain. Dreher told Board Members that people are inquiring about the proposal and he is hopeful that commitments will be made after the holidays.

In other action, the Board denied a grant request made by the Smith Road Water Association which asked for \$3,000 to study its water system in response to water quality concerns. In denying the grant, the Board did however offer a low interest loan of the same amount. The Smith Road Water Association serves 19 homes near Pocatello.

The Board did approve a \$220,00 loan to the Jefferson Irrigation Company to deepen one well and replace two others. The company delivers irrigation water to 11,000 acres near Mud Lake.

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